

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, VEN, DR

SUBJECT: VENEZUELAN FOREIGN MINISTER VISITS D.R.

1. ON AUGUST 28, VENEZUELAN FOREIGN MINISTER DR. RAMON ESCOVAR SALOM WOUND UP A THREE-DAY OFFICIAL VISIT TO DR WHICH INCLUDED MEETINGS WITH PRESIDENT BALAGUER, FOREIGN SECRETARY JIMENEZ, BUSINESSMEN, POLITICIANS AND THE PRESS. ARRIVING AT A TIME WHEN RELATIONS BETWEEN GOV AND GODR HAD COOLED BECAUSE OF VENEZUELA'S APPARENT UNWILLINGNESS TO MAKE CONCESSIONS TO HELP DR WITH ITS INCREASINGLY SERIOUS BALANCE OF PAYMENTS PROBLEMS, ESCOVAR CARRIED OUT WITH ECLAT A VIRTUOSO DIPLOMATIC TASK, STRESSING THE THEME THAT VENEZUELA, LIKE THE DR, WAS A DEVELOPING COUNTRY AND THAT INCREASED OIL PRICES WERE INTENDED TO PRESERVE NATURAL RESOURCES, NOT TO PUNISH LDCS. HE OBVIOUSLY WAS QUITE CONVINCING, FOR HE LEFT DR WITH MEDIA AND GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS GENERALLY PLEASED WITH THE VISIT BUT WITHOUT HAVING COMMITTED CARACAS TO ASSIST DR THROUGH SPECIFIC NEW B/P DEPARTURES.

2. PROGRESS WAS APPARENTLY MADE TOWARD AN AGREEMENT ON VENEZUELAN ASSISTNCE FOR OIL EXPLORATION. VENEZUELA ALSO APPEARS TO HAVE REPEATED ITS OFFER TO FINANCE, AT EIGHT PERCENT INTEREST, THE COSTS OF OIL OVER \$6.00 A BARREL, SOMEWHAT ALONG THE LINES OF THE AGREEMENT WITH SEVERAL CENTRAL AMERICAN STATES. A HIGH-LEVEL
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DOMINICAN TECHNICAL COMMISSION WILL TRAVEL TO VENEZUELA "WITHIN

THE NEXT FEW DAYS," ACCORDING TO THE FINAL COMMUNIQUE, TO CONSIDER THE FINANCING PROPOSAL. THE JOINT STATEMENT ALSO CALLED FOR AN EXPANSION OF EXISTING CULTURAL, COMMERCIAL AND CIVIL AVIATION AGREEMENTS.

3. ESCOVAR APPEARS TO HAVE CHARMED THE GODR INTO A MORE FAVORABLE ATTITUDE TOWARD VENEZUELA, BUT THE LASTING EFFECTS OF HIS VISIT WILL BE TESTED IN THE NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN THE DOMINICAN TECHNICAL COMMISSION ON A FORMULA FOR FINANCING EXCESS PETROLEUM COSTS. BECAUSE THE BALANCE OF APYMENTS SITUATION HAS BECOME MORE SERIOUS, THE GODR MAY NOW FIND A FINANCING ARRANGEMENT WITH VENEZUELA MORE ATTRACTIVE.

4. PERHAPS THE MOST SIGNIFICANT ASPECT OF ESCOVAR'S VISIT WAS THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE TWO COUNTRIES FOUND AGREEMENT ON THIRD WORLD ISSUES. ALTHOUGH THE LANGUAGE OF THE JOINT COMMUNIQUE IS MODERATE, IT LINES UP THE DR, FOR THE FIRST TIME IN A SINGLE DOCUMENT, IN SUPPORT OF A NEW INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC ORDER, THE CHARTER OF ECONOMIC RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS OF STATES, SELA AND PANAMANIAN SOVEREIGNTY OVER THE CANAL. A REITERATION OF SOVEREIGNTY OF STATES OVER THEIR NATURAL RESOURCES AND REJECTIONS OF "COERCIVE MEASURES" IMPUNGING THIS SOVEREIGNTY WERE ALSO THROWN IN, AND WILL DOUBTLESSLY BE INTERPRETED LOCALLY, IN THE CONTEXT OF THE CURRENT NEGOTIATIONS WITH ROSARIO.
HURWITCH

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